CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL [redacted] 25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY [redacted] 25X1

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Latvia

DATE DISTR. 5 Mar 1953

SUBJECT Pharmacy Practices in the Latvian Army/ University of Latvia in Riga

NO. OF PAGES 4

PLACE ACQUIRED [redacted]

NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)

DATE ACQUIRED [redacted]

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. 25X1

DATE OF INFORMATION [redacted]

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

[redacted] 25X1

Pharmacy Practices in the Latvian Army

1. Every male Latvian citizen, who had reached the age of 21, was subject to compulsory military service in the army. During peace time, the Latvian Army was composed of the following: 1) a permanent cadre, including a) officers and soldiers on active duty, and b) instructors on voluntary extended duty; 2) army conscripts (15 to 18 months).

2. A similar division existed in the medical or pharmaceutical fields. Physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians, i e, officers in the medical service, were considered on active military duty. Medical assistants, including feldshers and assistant pharmacists, i e, instructors in the medical service, were on voluntary extended duty. Trained assistant feldshers and medical service attendants and litter bearers were conscripted into service.

3. The Latvian Army provided direct training only for the lower levels of medical personnel: military feldshers and orderlies. Physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians were university graduates.

4. Each year a certain number of new army conscripts were trained for the medical service. For this purpose, persons with an appropriate general education and some suitable previous experience (pharmacist's apprentices, druggists, hospital attendants, etc) were chosen. After completing the basic military training course (2-3 months), trainees were sent to medical courses held by the Riga Military Hospital which provided the following theoretical and practical training:

   a. structure and functions of the principal parts of the human organism (anatomy and physiology)

   b. general knowledge of diseases and injuries

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c. dressing of wounds

d. fractures and sprains

e. preparation and use of medicines

f. care of the sick and wounded

g. medical service on the battlefield

h. first aid in case of accidents or sudden illness

i. general knowledge of hygiene

j. Latin language

5. The duration of the course was 5½ to 6 months. Medical service trainees who completed the course successfully were assigned to individual army units for practical work as assistant feldshers. In this way trainees could review and supplement the knowledge acquired during the course. Before being released from military service (after about 10 months of practical work), and with the approval of the unit physician, the trainees could take an examination for the rank of feldsher. Tests were given on the same subjects as before but required more theoretical and practical knowledge. After successful completion of the tests, the trainee acquired the rank of military feldsher; and, if a vacancy were available, he could remain on extended duty as a feldsher or pharmacist's assistant. The latter (i e, pharmacist's assistants) received additional training in pharmaceutical work (about 2 months) in the main pharmacy of the military medical depot. Litter bearers and attendants were trained by the medical officer of the unit.

6. University graduates (military service could be deferred for the purpose of completing one's university education), including physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians who had completed the basic military training course and the practical training in an instructors' company, were sent to a 6-months course for assistant medical officers. Assistant medical officers who had completed their regular military duty could remain in the army (if a vacancy were available) as medical officers.

7. Each military unit, i e, each regiment as well as individual battalions, had a dispensary and aid station. The head of the dispensary was a pharmaceutical feldsher or assistant pharmacist. Narcotics were under the supervision of a physician. Medicines, surgical dressings, and medical supplies were received from the army medical depot. Each military unit was allotted a certain norm of supplies, which was delivered regularly every three months. In emergency cases, additional supplies could be requested at any time and the standard norm could be exceeded.

8. The medical depot and the pharmacies of military hospitals were under the supervision of qualified pharmacists (medical officers) and assistant pharmacists.

9. The higher authority in the military medical service was represented by the military medical administration and the pharmacy inspector.

10. The Latvian Army provided free medical care for family members of army personnel; this necessitated strict supervision and accounting. The pharmacy inspector supervised the work of army pharmacies. Medical supplies for the military medical depot were purchased and delivered directly by the medical administration and the military pharmacy inspector.

11. There were private pharmacies for the needs of the civilian population. The number of pharmacies was determined according to distances and the number of inhabitants. There were also wholesale medicine stores, medicinal herb nurseries, and laboratories.

12. Later, the system of socialized medicine (health insurance) became widespread. Special pharmacies existed within this sytem. Every salaried employee (or worker) and his family carried health insurance.

13. There were special pharmacy laws and regulations; the Pharmacy Administration and its auditors supervised the observance of such laws.

University of Latvia in Riga

14. The Polytechnical Institute in Riga was founded in 1862. It was reorganized on 2 Aug 19, and on 28 Sep 19 the Minister of Education K Kasparsons announced the opening of the Latvian University. It was expanded on 23 Mar 23. The Latvian Parliament adopted the Constitution of the Latvian University, which made it an autonomous institution with a right to decide its own affairs.

15. The Latvian University had the following faculties and departments [illegible]:

A. Architecture
B. Philology and philosophy
C. Engineering Sciences
   (1) Department of Engineering Sciences
   (2) Department of Land Improvement
D. Chemistry
   (1) Chemistry Department
   (2) Pharmaceutics Department
E. Agriculture
   (1) Agriculture Department)later reorganized as the Agricultural
   (2) Forestry Department)Academy in Yelgava.
F. Mathematics and Natural Sciences
   (1) Mathematics Department
   (2) Natural Sciences Department
G. Mechanics
H. Medicine
   (1) Medicine Department
   (2) Dentistry Department
I. Political Economy and Law
   (1) Political Economy Department
   (2) Law Department
J. Theology, with a Roman Catholic Theology Department
K. Veterinary Medicine

16. The Latvian University occupied several buildings. The main building, at Raina bulvaris 19, was a stone building (1866-1885), which had been rebuilt and expanded several times. It occupied the city block between Raina bulvaris, Merkela iela, Arhitektu iela and Inzenieru iela. During the period of Latvian independence, a new building was erected on the university grounds; it contained an auditorium for 1,200 people and cloakrooms for 2000 students. The building of the chemistry faculty was at Kronvalda bulvaris 4; it was built in 1898-1901. This was a 3-story stone building; a fourth story was added in 1936-1937. Other buildings were located as follows: Medical Faculty building at Kronvalda bulvaris 9; Veterinary Medicine building at Pernavas iela 19; the building of the Agriculture Faculty at Kronvalda bulvaris 1; Mathematics and Natural Sciences at Alberta iela 10; Administrative Council at Baznicas iela 5. The university had an agricultural training farm in Vecauce; it included a nursery for medicinal herbs.

17. The Latvian University Botanical Garden in Riga, Kandavas iela 2, included 30 greenhouses for tropical and subtropical plants, lecture rooms, a library, and a museum.

18. The University had a council which elected the rector and two prorectors: one prorector for student affairs, and one prorector for administrative affairs. Each faculty had a dean and a secretary. [redacted] 25X1

19. Members of the teaching staff were assigned to the university as a whole. Each faculty had its own teaching staff; for the sake of economy, efforts were made to avoid parallelism, i.e. only the chemistry faculty had chemistry instructors, the medical faculty had medical instructors, the natural sciences faculty had the only instructors in natural sciences, etc. As a result, students of one faculty had to attend some lectures given by members of a different faculty. For example, pharmaceutists had to hear lectures on botany, plant anatomy, zoology, crystallography and mineral[illegible] given by members of the natural sciences faculty; lectures on physics, higher mathematics, and physical measuring methods, given by members of the mathematics faculty; lectures on human anatomy, microbiology and serology, pharmacology, hygiene and first aid, given by members of the medical faculty. On the other hand, students from other faculties attended various lectures in the building housing the chemistry and pharmaceutics departments. Various faculties did not have identical courses on the same subject. For example, students of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and natural science, had a much more limited course in chemistry than students of chemistry and pharmaceutics, and students of agriculture had even less chemistry; however, the teaching staff and the teaching equipment were the same. Naturally, the course of lectures to be attended by pharmaceutists in other faculties, was also on a reduced scale. This system had some drawbacks. Much time was lost walking from one building to another, but on the whole it provided the opportunity of acquiring more universal and comprehensive knowledge, as all available information on one subject was concentrated in one place. This was very important in the case of a small state.

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